

August 14, 2006

Afghanistan **Freedom** Watch



**Coalition teamwork
provides medical help**

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Right: Air Force Airman 1st Class Christopher Leach, foreground, attaches a fuel hose from a tanker truck to an A-10 Thunderbolt II at Bagram Airfield on Aug. 5. He is assisted by Air Force Airman 1st Class Perry Friend, an A-10 crew chief.

Photo by Air Force Maj. David Kurle
455th Air Expeditionary Wing public affairs



Cover: Army Maj. Catherine Bradshaw administers a shot to an Afghan woman. The Bagram Cooperative Medical Assistance team conducted a joint medical civil action program with the New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction Team in the Panjab and Waras Districts, Bamyan Province.

Photo by Army Sgt. Nina J. Ramon
345th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

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Afghanistan **Freedom** Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan **Watch**

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MPs, Bagram PRT train Afghan National Police

By Army Spc.

James Tamez

19th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- Coalition service members from the Bagram Provincial Reconstruction Team and the 561st Military Police Company provided security training for Afghan National Police personnel here July 24 and 25.

"We covered handcuffing, reacting to bomb threats, searching vehicles and explosive ordinance disposal," said Air Force Staff Sgt. Michael Myers, instructor, Bagram PRT.

This was a program designed to supplement the training ANP personnel receive at their academy, Myers said.

"I am very comfortable with the training," said ANP Capt. Maj. Fazlay Manala. "As ANP, I take the security of Afghanistan very seriously. I



Photo by Army Spc. James Tamez

ANP Maj. Jalal Duin tosses a knife hidden in a boot during security training July 25.

can teach what I have learned (here to other ANP personnel)."

The training culminated with a practical exercise simulating a roadside checkpoint, where the instructors role-played enemy forces.

It forced the ANP personnel

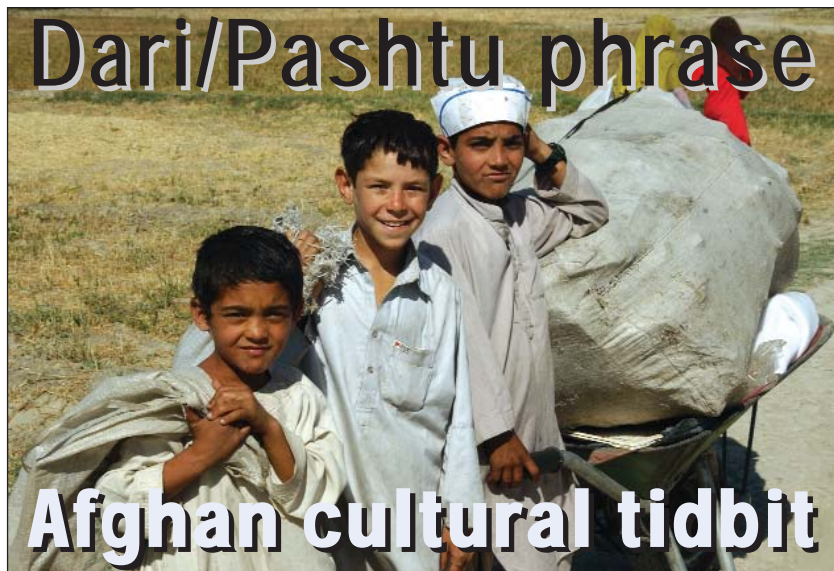
to practice the newfound techniques, said Army Staff Sgt. David Rupp, instructor, 2nd Platoon, 561st Military Police Company.

"By serving the local forces this way, they are making themselves stronger," Rupp added.

"We train ANP personnel to

do their jobs more efficiently, which frees up Coalition Forces for other missions," Myers said. "We want to build up their confidence so they can stand up to the Taliban and insurgent forces, so they can have freedom here like we do in the U.S."

Dari/Pashtu phrase of the week



Afghan cultural tidbit

Photo by Army Pfc. Michael J. Nyeste

Are you hungry?

Dari

Aya shuma gurisna hasted?

(Eye-yah shoo-mah goor-ees-nah hah-stayed?)

Pashtu

Taso wazsha ye?

(Tah-soh wah-ja yay?)

A favorite sport in northern Afghanistan is a game called buzkashi, in which teams of horsemen compete to deposit the carcass of a large headless calf in a goal circle. Afghans also play polo and ghosai, a team sport similar to wrestling.

Rabat celebrates new solar-powered well

By Army 2nd Lt. Jennifer Hwang
27th Engineer Battalion

FORWARD OPERATING BASE ORGUN E, Afghanistan -- Coalition and Afghan officials celebrated the completion of a solar water well in Rabat, Paktika Province, on July 29.

The well, which has a 20,000-liter capacity, is one of the many projects designed to help rebuilding efforts in the country.

"The townspeople of Rabat will really benefit from the new well," said Army Capt. Paul Deis, civil affairs officer, 27th Engineer Battalion. "The people need a reliable source of clean water for drinking and sanitation."

Twelve solar panels power the well, providing water year-round, Deis said.

The 27th Engineers have dedicated more than \$500,000 to similar projects throughout the Paktika Province. The unit is aggressively pursuing a robust civil affairs program in the area to help maintain positive relations between coalition forces, local citizens, and Afghan political and military leaders.

Deis said the project could not be completed without the efforts among coalition forces, local government leaders, ANP and



Photo by Army 2nd Lt. Jennifer Hwang

Army Lt. Col. Thomas O'Hara, left, and Army Capt. Paul Deis pose with a group of Afghans and a yellow ribbon used to commemorate the opening of the new well.

local labor forces. Construction of the well took more than three months to complete and employed 15 local electricians, masons and general laborers.

The 27th Engineer Battalion (Combat Airborne), Afghan National Police, local government officials and tribal elders celebrated the event.

"I hold very high hopes for the Afghan people," commented Army Lt. Col. Thomas O'Hara, commander, 27th En. Bn. "They are learning to work together and they know that they need to cooperate with each other and with Coalition troops in order to achieve a stable and secure future."

Enduring Voices

What is one of the most important things you've learned on this deployment?



**Navy Airman
Dean Burroughs**

Bagram Airfield

"Learning how to get along with the people you work with. Communication is the biggest thing by far."



**Army Spc.
Trevor Olsen**

Bagram Airfield

"I've learned that we are all military, regardless of branch of service."



**Army Sgt. 1st Class
Joscelyn Francis**

Bagram Airfield

"Safety and taking care of your fellow Soldiers."



**Army Chief Warrant Officer
Karen Perez**

Bagram Airfield

"I've learned that each deployment is different and has its own challenges."

Afghan National Police partake in pistol training

By Army Pfc.

Anna K. Perry

19th Public Affairs Detachment

GHAZNI, Afghanistan --

Afghan National Police officers in Ghazni recently obtained some valuable knowledge to spread to their fellow officers throughout the province's police stations.

Military police from the Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team spent a morning going over the fundamentals of the Smith and Wesson Sigma pistol with seven ANP training officers.

"Today we're working with a small group of the ANP trainers, giving them in depth training they can bring back to their soldiers," said Army Sgt. Scott Balzer, an MP assigned to the 544th MP Company.

There simply aren't enough MPs to train every ANP officer in Ghazni and that makes understanding this information extremely important for these training officers, Balzer added.

Balzer's small team went over everything from firing and disassembling the weapon to safety procedures that must be followed at all times while carrying the weapon.

"Safety is probably the most important thing we want to get



Photo by Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry

Afghan National Police officers hold disassembled weapons during weapons training in Ghazni on July 29.

across to them ... keeping it holstered, only drawing it when it's needed and going through the levels of force," Balzer said.

For the most part, they are retaining everything quickly because they want to understand. They are working with sophisticated American weapons they've had some difficulty breaking down the weapon and understanding the compo-

nents, Balzer added.

Balzer said he is hopeful the ANP officers will adequately be able to disseminate the information to their troops.

"Today we are training them. We will train side-by-side during the next course. Our goal is to stand back and let them do all of the training to the point where they won't need any supervision from us," Balzer said.

One ANP training officer said he is excited about sharing the day's training with his troops.

The more knowledge the Ghazni police officers have, the better they can provide security for the region, said Col. Moohamad Mainnasil.

"I feel prepared to go to the police station and begin training my soldiers," he added.

Commander proves guilt of extremists in Khost Province

By Army Sgt. 1st Class

Michael Pintagro

Task Force Spartan public affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan -- Mullahs who expressed doubts about the guilt of slain insurgents were offered compelling evidence by the Task Force Wolfpack commander during a shura, or meeting, conducted July 26 at the Khost Civil Military Operations Center.

About 10 mullahs sat in rapt attention, intently scanning documents disseminated

by Army Lt. Col. David A. Bushey as he outlined conclusive evidence of the terrorist affiliations of three mullahs recently killed by Coalition forces in the Bak District of Khost Province in eastern Afghanistan.

The mullahs watched as the commander presented photographs of weapons, al Qaeda training videos, compact disks and photos of the slain fighters.

"We did not want to kill these people," Bushey added. "Coalition Soldiers fired at them only after they resisted."

After surveying the evidence of the extremists' guilt, the mullahs pledged to share their observations with the communities they serve.

The shura provided a forum for open discussion of provincial issues by Coalition leaders and some of Khost's most prominent religious figures. Additionally, the shura promoted effective communication and mutual understanding among Khost religious leaders and American service members serving in Afghanistan.

Thunder Radio rocks airwaves across Afghanistan

By Army Pfc. Michael J. Nyeste
19th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Members of American Forces Network have launched Thunder Radio, “The Voice of Operation Enduring Freedom,” which can now be heard at bases around the

Coalition Joint Operating Area.

“There is now an American Forces Network radio show broadcasting from Afghanistan,” said Air Force Senior Master Sgt. John Tway, the station manager with AFN Afghanistan. “We support the troops and entertain them. We also keep them informed while they're being

entertained by giving them command information about safety issues, forward operating base policies and weather. We also give them the news, the news that they're making.”

The new service can be heard in four different locations.

Service members in Kabul, Bagram, Khandahar and Manas, can listen to the same songs they would hear back in the U.S. by listening to their radios, televisions and AFN satellite decoders, Tway said.

“We use the same music listing reports stateside stations use in choosing what we play,” Tway said.

Not only are they be listening to the same songs they'd hear stateside, but they can listening without commercial interruption.

“We don't want them to change the station. I know when I listen to the radio, as soon as a commercial comes on, I change the station,” Tway said.

Having the commercial-free entertainment didn't come without a lot of effort from AFN Afghanistan members.

“We had people working hard on this since late May,” said Tway. “The broadcasters here want troops to enjoy this service.”

Tway said he wants this service to provide the background music of service members' daily activities here just like it does for many people back home.



Photo by Army Pfc. Michael J. Nyeste

Air Force Senior Master Sgt. John Tway prepares to record a few lines for a sound clip that will be used on Thunder Radio. Tway is the station manager for American Forces Network - Afghanistan.

Thunder Radio broadcast schedule

94.1 FM in Bagram, Kabul and Khandahar; 91.5 FM in Manas

Monday-Friday

6:30 - 9:30 am
9:30 am - 11:30 am
2:30 - 6:30 pm
8:30 - 11:30 pm

Air Force Sergeant John Tway
Air Force Sergeant Brett Reinhardt
Airman Mindy Freeman
Army Sergeant Tim Hanson

Classic and Alternative Rock
Alternative, Hip Hop, R&B
Alternative, Hip Hop, R&B
Alternative, Hip Hop, R&B

Saturday

9:30 - 11:30 am
1:30 - 3:30 pm

Air Force Sergeant John Tway
Army Captain Jim Bono
Army Sergeant Mike Rautio
Air Force Sergeant Brett Reinhardt
Army Sergeant Tim Hanson

Classic Rock
“The Sports Huddle”

Clinic provides medical care, security

By Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry
19th Public Affairs Detachment

GHAZNI, Afghanistan – Although most of the world has never heard of the small Ghazni Regional Clinic, the facility means everything to the more than 6,500 Afghan civilians who have received free medical care since the clinic's opening in January.

The facility, which is run by Afghan National Army medical personnel from the 2nd and 5th Kandaks of the 1st Brigade, 203rd Corps, is mainly used to treat ANA soldiers, but opens its doors for Afghan citizens two days a week.

Welcoming the civilians is significant for a number of reasons, said Army Capt. Brian Komar, a Kansas National Guard Soldier and civilian registered nurse.

Most importantly, the Afghans come here and are cared for by their soldiers. They are able to see that the ANA are friends and can be trusted, said Komar, who is deployed as an embedded team trainer to help provide mentorship to the ANA.

"This clinic's mission wouldn't happen without the ANA. They take care of people and administer medications and I just supervise and mentor them," Komar added.

While the ANA improve the patients' health with treatment and medicine, the patients help bolster security for the forward operating base and the ANA compound.



Photo by Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry

An Afghan National Army soldier provides treatment for an injured Afghan man at the Ghazni Regional Clinic.

"I directly attribute the clinic's presence to the decreased number of rocket attacks and small arms fire we've received," Komar said.

If extremists destroyed the clinic, the local people wouldn't tolerate it because they are receiving quality care here, he added.

The clinic is very important for the peo-

ple of Ghazni because they simply cannot afford to receive care elsewhere, agreed Dilagha Ansari, an Afghan patient at the clinic.

"I'm feeling good because after years of war in Afghanistan, people are joining hands once again to help this country prosper and I'm very grateful for the Coalition," Ansari added.

Replacement for 10th Mountain Division named

Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan Public Affairs

KABUL, Afghanistan -- A combat brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division will deploy to Afghanistan late this year as part of the next rotation of U.S. forces, the U.S. Department of Defense announced this week.

The deployment, to include the 82nd Airborne headquarters staff and various support units, will total about 11,000

service members, and will replace approximately the same number of service members with the 10th Mountain Division and the Combined Joint Task Force-76.

The scheduled rotation for these forces will begin in late-2006, the announcement said.

In consultation with the Afghan government, commanders continue to assess the situation to ensure sufficient force levels to best support the

Afghan government. The U.S. force rotations may be tailored based upon changes in the security situation.

Afghan National Army forces continue to develop capability and assume responsibility for security in Afghanistan.

This rotation continues the U.S. commitment to Afghanistan, yet is flexible and adaptable in order to meet the evolving requirements for the mission, said the announce-

ment. It does not change the overall approximate number of U.S. service members in Afghanistan.

U.S. force levels are expected to remain at about 20,000 service members for the foreseeable future.

"The U.S. contribution has stayed stable and will remain stable," said Marine Gen. Peter Pace, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, at an Aug. 2 Pentagon press conference.



Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Stephanie Baldanado, medical assistant, checks the heart rate of an elderly Afghan woman.



Army Maj. Jessica McCoy, veterinarian, treats a villager's horse with de-worming medication.

Coalition conducts succe

By Army Sgt. Nina J. Ramon

345th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- Coalition forces, to include the Bagram Cooperative Medical Assistance team and New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction team, conducted a joint medical civil action program July 22 to 29 in the Panjab and Waras districts of Bamyan Province.

During the visits to the Tarapass and Petabjoy valley systems, the combined team stopped at local medical centers before traveling to schools to provide medical support to villagers. The medical centers visited included Panjab District Hospital, the biggest hospital in the area, and the Shinya Ashkarat Clinic of Basic Health Care.

"We provide training best needed for problems and concerns in the area," said Army Maj. Anthony Littrell, CMA director from Samford, N.C. "The area is inaccessible nine months out of the year due to harsh weather conditions. Because of this, non-urgent cases can be treated at individual homes by community health workers."

Coalition medical professionals spoke with the doctors and midwives, discussing ways to improve care in the area, particularly during the harsh seasons.



Army Maj. Catherine Bradshaw administers an IV to an Afghan child.

Successful medical mission

New Zealand team medics mentored community health workers to improve basic first-aid skills so community health workers can take those basic skills into the villages to educate the people and offer medical assistance.

“We are here to assess the health care needs of the local population -- people who are not able to visits clinics,” said Littrell. “We’re also providing humanitarian aid supplies including hygiene, school and first-aid kits, along with vegetable oil and bags of beans, rice and salt.”

The medical teams also traveled to various schools, including the Tarapass and Binigaw Schools, where local villagers received basic medical checkups and treatment. The team treated more than 5,500 patients over a three-day visit.

Along with treating villagers in each area, CMA team veterinarians vaccinated and de-wormed roughly 3,000 animals. According to Army Maj. Jessica McCoy, the CMA team’s veterinarian from Wellesley, Mass., an average herd consists of 60 to 80 animals.

“Everything went smoothly,” said New Zealand Maj. Rob Francis, Kiwi team patrol commander. “The only thing that posed a challenge was the large number of people that showed up, which is a good problem to have.”



Photos by Army Sgt. Nina J. Ramon

Army Maj. Jessica McCoy, veterinarian, and New Zealand Lt. Cpt. Cheryl Ward, patrol medic, treat a wounded donkey.

U.S., ANA troops join forces in Ghazni

By Army Pfc.

Anna K. Perry

19th Public Affairs Detachment

GHAZNI, Afghanistan -- Afghan National Army soldiers and Provincial Reconstruction Team members in Ghazni recently teamed up for a presence patrol through several of the province's villages.

These presence patrols show extremists the Coalition is proactively helping the region deal with terrorist problems, said Army Capt. Matt Cain, an embedded team trainer with the ANA 2nd Kandak, 1st Brigade, and 203rd Corps in Ghazni.

"Judging from all the waving and smiling people we saw, I'd say they were happy to see us," said Cain. "We were also able to see the progress they've made on the new route from Ghazni to Orgun-E."

The patrols not only let the bad guys know they won't be tolerated, but they give the ANA and U.S. troops an opportunity to join forces.



Photo by Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry

Afghan National Army soldiers from the 2nd Kandak, 1st Brigade, 203rd Corps prepare to roll out on a mission with American members of the Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team.

"We've found that the PRT and the ANA really enjoy working together," Cain said. "We go out on missions together several times a week, whether on presence patrols or humanitarian assistance missions."

The collaborative missions also prove to be a learning experience for the ANA.

"They learn a lot from watching the Americans, who have been doing (missions like this) for years," Cain said.

Missions like the presence

patrol are good for the security of this province, he added.

"The Taliban will know that the Coalition and the ANA are working together, that we have a good army," said one of the ANA soldiers assigned to the mission.

Afghan officials assist villagers affected by floods

Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan responded to the flash flood crisis in eastern Afghanistan that started last weekend and continued through the beginning of the week.

Evidence of local, district and provincial government assistance emerged almost immediately as government officials employed all available re-sources to assist Afghans affected by the floods, said Col. Thomas Collins, Coalition spokesman.

"Afghan leaders at all levels organized volunteer citizens, support and equipment from Coalition forces and the effective use of radio messages to help save lives, fix

damage and keep people informed," said Collins.

Torrential rains in the mountains resulted in runoff that quickly filled the wadis and caused massive damage, including a preliminary report of 15 people killed, hundreds of homes damaged or destroyed and extensive agricultural loss, to include animals and crops in Nangarhar, Paktia, Khost and Ghazni provinces.

"We were caught completely by surprise," said Saifullah Haqmal, a resident of Sony Sorhk village in Khost. "All of a sudden we heard a loud noise (of rushing water) and then we were covered. Many of our houses were flooded, and dead animals and large pieces of wood were washing down, as well."

On Monday, local radio stations in Khost provided people the phone number of their Provincial Coordination Center in case they needed emergency assistance from the Afghan National Security forces.

On Tuesday, Mohammad Omar, the director of rural development in Khost, held an Emergency Management Council Response Meeting to help organize response teams and assess damages in his province.

In the villages of Chamkani and Patan in Paktia Province, the sub-governor quickly assessed the need and coordinated with Coalition forces for Coalition bulldozers to fix washed out areas and quickly construct an obstacle to prevent any further damage from floodwaters.

Muleskinners pave way for water bottling plant

**By Army Sgt. 1st Class
Michael Rautio**

Joint Logistics Command

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- The ground-breaking in July of a new water bottling plant in Bagram signified months of planning and coordination among Coalition forces and government officials, thanks to Joint Logistics Command efforts.

This plant complements the strategic objectives of Coalition forces in Afghanistan of promoting economic expansion within the country, according to Army Maj. Tom Devine, the civil affairs officer for JLC, the "Muleskinners."

The plant also eases the logistical burden for Coalition forces needing to move massive amounts of bottled water into the country, he added, and will save the Coalition an estimated \$22 million a year in bottled water costs.

Devine said during the construction phase, several hundred Afghans from the Bagram region can expect to be employed. Once the plant is

operational, roughly 60-80 Afghans can expect full-time employment. About half of those jobs will be skilled jobs, and Afghans will receive the required training for those positions.

Ahmad Zia Masoud, the first vice-president of Afghanistan, took the first ceremonial shovel of dirt at the ceremony.

and private sector officials to secure the land, ensure that land was safe and ensure the water was safe.

When a problem arose, Devine said he would work between the parties so they could continue toward their common goal of opening an operational water bottling plant.

said Army Col. Larry D. Wyche, commander of the Joint Logistics Command and 10th Sustainment Brigade on Fort Drum. "We knew we wanted to try and attack this challenge during this deployment. As soon as we found out that there was a group of Afghan investors wanting to partner with us and build the plant, we moved forward quickly."

A private company will run the plant, which will produce nearly 325,000 bottles of water a day. It will use the most current technology to produce water to exceed bottling water standards set by the International Bottled Water Association.

"Projects like this allow us to attain our operational and strategic objectives," said Wyche. "This will ultimately allow us to return home as the Afghan National Army and Police demonstrate that they can provide a secure environment against terrorism which in turn stimulates the economy."

"Today is a great day for Afghanistan. Not only will this plant stimulate the economy by providing jobs, it brings prosperity to the region and the country."

*Ahmad Zia Masoud
Vice President of Afghanistan*

"Today is a great day for Afghanistan," he said. "Not only will this plant stimulate the economy by providing jobs, it brings prosperity to the region and the country."

Getting the project off the ground meant a comprehensive team of players working together. Coalition forces coordinated with government

Finding funding — \$4 million in construction and \$3 million in equipment costs — was one of the biggest challenges confronting the planning efforts of previous teams.

"We knew that there was a requirement for a bottled water plant in Afghanistan that would serve Coalition forces as well as the Afghan people,"



PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

Members of the Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team and volunteers unload a 5-ton truckload of humanitarian assistance food supplies near Abdara on July 30.

Photo by Air Force Capt. Joe Campbell
Panjshir PRT

If you have high-quality photos of service members supporting the Coalition mission or enjoying well-deserved off-duty time, please e-mail them to freedomwatch@baf.af.mil. Please include full identification and caption information, including who is in the photo and what action is taking place.

TF Catamount enters 10th Mountain Division fraternity

By Army Sgt. Mayra Kennedy
345th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- Members of the 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Catamount, earned their combat badges at a ceremony here July 24.

Army Lt. Col. Chris R. Toner, commander of TF Catamount, 10th Mountain Division (Light), Fort Drum, N.Y., expressed to his Soldiers the privilege of wearing this patch.

"You've just entered an elite fraternity," said Toner. "This fraternity you are now in is exclusive and has the most extreme initiation process

because it requires its members to place themselves in the front line for freedom."

Toner, who referred to his Soldiers as combat veterans, expressed his pride on how TF Catamount build a forward operating base in only five days and simultaneously executed security and combat operations during Operation Mountain Thrust.

Task Force Catamount recently completed a mission in Musa Qaleh, Helmand province, where they played an essential part of the operation. There the unit lost two Soldiers in action.

Army Capt. David Ditolla, chaplain with TF Catamount, said a prayer for the troops and expressed how proud



Photo by Army Sgt. Mayra Kennedy

Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Catamount, Fort Drum, N.Y., salute during a patch ceremony held here July 24.

everyone should be of themselves.

"We thank you specifically for these great Americans, who have willingly volun-

teered to serve freedom," said Ditolla. "Please continue to guide us and give us courage as we finish the work that we started."

Panjshir PRT medics visit remote Afghan district

By Air Force Capt. Joe Campbell
Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team
PANJSHIR PROVINCE,

Afghanistan -- Afghans walked as far as six miles and waited as long as eight hours for treatment by Air Force medics from the Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team who visited the Paryan District on July 15 to 16.

"We saw the dire need in Paryan when we were here recently to do site evaluations and humanitarian assistance drop planning," said Maj. Kurt Workmaster, Panjshir PRT physician assistant.

At nearly 10,000 feet above sea level, Paryan is the northernmost point and has the highest elevation of the six districts in the Panjshir Valley. Because of the rough and narrow road, it took the team nearly six hours to reach the district from their headquarters in Bazarak.

Paryan has only one physician at its Basic Health Clinic along with two nurses and one midwife for the district's 38,000 residents.

"On the previous visit, I saw 70 patients in one day out of the back of a traveling vehicle, and one of the clearest lessons I

got out of that experience was this is not the way to go," said Workmaster, a reservist stationed at Duke Field, Fla.

For the most recent mini-MEDCAP, the team set up at a private residence in a remote village to reach those who were hampered by the distance to the clinic. They treated women and children in the morning and men in the afternoon.

"We saw the dire need in Paryan when we were here recently..."

Maj. Kurt Workmaster
Panjshir PRT physician assistant

"With the help of our interpreters, we had one medic screen, triage, and collect patient vital signs while the others performed procedures and filled prescriptions," said Air Force Senior Airman Conan Broyles, Panjshir PRT medic from Barksdale AFB, La.

The medics planned for family medicine versus emergency medicine, a lesson they

had learned on previous MEDCAPs.

"We mostly treated patients for arthritis, acid reflux, congestion and skin and eye irritations," said Air Force Tech. Sgt. Charles Campbell, noncommissioned officer in charge of the medics.

Campbell is deployed from Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla. He added that some conditions needed further evaluation and the medics explained this to the patient or parent and often provided a note to assist with the referral.

The team saw more than 200 patients. The Medical Civic Action Program, or MEDCAP, was coordinated at the invitation of Panjshir Director of Health Dr. Jellani. Paryan District police provided officers for escort and security for the event.

The medics were equally moved by the Afghans' consideration of their well-being. "A woman told me she prayed for the safety of the Americans every night and she had a dream that an American doctor was coming to the village," said Shahla Hammond, Panjshir PRT interpreter. "That was very touching to all of us."

Personnel showcase ability at Bagram Talent Show

By Army Spc.

James Tamez

19th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- Dancing and singing took center stage July 29 and 30 at Bagram's first talent show, with a Joint Logistics Command first sergeant earning top honors.

First Sgt. Elston Steele, Signal Company, 10th Logistics Task Force, JLC, took first place with his rendition of R-Kelly's hit R&B song, "A Soldier's Heart."

Brian Williamson, an Air Mobility Command employee, finished second with his rendition of Marc Kohn's smash hit, "Walking in Memphis."

More than 30 individuals and groups entertained the Bagram audience with skits, ballroom dancing, guitar playing, rapping and singing.

"The participation in the show has been absolutely great," said James Hunter, master of ceremonies for the talent show. "Five judges determined the top four performances, and they re-entertained the audience at the end of the show."

Events like these provide Soldiers with alternatives to boredom, repetitious activities and excitement of a positive nature, said Steele. "It gives troops the opportunity to express themselves and their creativity." He added that it was more of a morale booster than a competition.

The talent show was patriotic, emotional, and represented everyone who was there, said Marine Master Sgt. Carlotta Moore, Marine Corps Element Afghanistan.

Moore was one of five judges who helped deter-



Photo by Army Pfc. Michael J. Nyeste

Brian "Red" Williamson performs 'Walking in Memphis' for the Bagram Talent Show on July 29. Williamson placed second in the overall competition.

mined the four top performances.

"I liked the diversity of the performances," she said. "All the performers were winners and their courage should be applauded for the entertainment they provided."

Hunter said this is the fifth show held in Afghanistan and the first on Bagram that he has been involved with. The other four were held in Kandahar.

"Troops everywhere deployed in combat are mak-

ing huge sacrifices, knowing the possibility of losing their lives exists," Steele said.

"These types of events bring people together and promote social interaction, which is good for sustaining the mission."

Chosin Soldiers tame notorious Pech Valley road

By Army Sgt. 1st Class

Michael Pintagro

Task Force Spartan public affairs

CAMP BLESSING, Afghanistan --

"All you guys are doing things I haven't seen Soldiers do in my 20 years in the Army."

Army Command Sgt. Maj. James Carabello, the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment command sergeant major, delivered those words to infantrymen during an impromptu visit to their Pech River Road command post on the morning of Aug. 1.

"This battalion goes on pushing forward day in and day out. People who hear about what you're doing right now won't believe what they hear," the Boston native said. "They won't believe it, but you're living it so you'll know it's true."

The men Carabello addressed, Soldiers from D and C Companies, 1-32 Inf., deployed into the Pech River Valley at the start of May and remain vigilant there today.

Living and working amid the most austere of conceivable environments equipped only with the barest of necessities as temperatures climb as high as 130 degrees would be considered remarkable anywhere outside the Chosin Battalion. But as Carabello pointed out, 1-32 infantrymen consider such exploits routine.

Chosin Soldiers have lived and operated in remote field locations in the Korengal and Pech Valleys for as many as 115 consecutive days.

Patrol Base California lays just northeast of "IED cliff" on the Pech River Road in northeast Afghanistan. The terrain feature derived its name from the frequent — and frequently lethal — improvised explosive device attacks launched by terrorists operating in the Pech River Valley of northeast Afghanistan against Coalition soldiers.

Soldiers from C and D Companies, 1-32 Inf. operate a string of similar tiny posts along the Pech River Road, using the locations to store supplies and to protect the command and control nodes for the patrols and other field operations they have been conducting continuously in the



Photos by Army Sgt. 1st Class Michael Pintagro

Army Pfc. Jacob Gall, an infantryman with D Company, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, Task Force Spartan, provides security with the help of an improved target acquisition system and squad automatic weapon.

valley since the beginning of April. The patrol bases allow the Chosin Soldiers to remain in the field without having to return to forward operating bases for over a month at a time; many Chosin soldiers have spent more than three months without returning to a FOB for more than 24 hours.

The Pech River Road, a once-notorious thoroughfare for insurgents and venue of terrorist attacks, lay quiet as Carabello discussed operations with his infantrymen. The silence, a decided trend in recent months, reflected the efforts of some of Operation Enduring Freedom's true if unsung heroes.

"When I first came here last November for (a pre-deployment reconnaissance) this road was no-man's land," said Army Maj. Paul N. Garcia, the Chosin Battalion operations officer. "When we went down the road, it was a major combat opera-

tion.

"The enemy owned the road," added the McAllen, Texas, native. The insurgents "operated freely. The Marines were regularly attacked by enemy forces employing complex tactics including IEDs."

Due mainly to the efforts of Chosin infantrymen, the Pech River Road now lays open to civilian as well as military travel.

"We now own the valley," Garcia observed. "We now own the terrain. The enemy doesn't have the same freedom of movement he had along the Pech. We've forced him into the high ground or into other areas, where he's forced to take longer shots, which are less effective. The population feels safer, more comfortable giving us information because they know

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we're going to stay."

"This is the way you defeat an insurgency," added Carabello. "The primary way to defeat an insurgency is to live among the people and gain their trust. You need to show them that you have more to offer than the insurgents. Once you've shown the people you have more to offer – most importantly credibility – than the insurgency, you've won."

Army 1st Lt. Michael Harrison, a platoon leader attached to C Company, 1-32 Inf., commands the western portion of the Pech Valley, conducting continuous patrols and observation posts out of Patrol Base California, a small, temporary ring of Hesco barriers that houses and protects his supplies and platoon control point.

Harrison, 24, from Rural Retreat, Va., said he and his colleagues – most even younger than himself – battled insurgents in nearly two dozen firefights over the last three months. In addition to their offensive operations, the

unit also withstood regular – daily during peak seasons – rocket and mortar attacks from extremists operating in the region.

According to Harrison, Soldiers manning the outpost "have a two-fold mission: winning the hearts and minds of the people, which we consider our primary mission, and interdicting the enemy along the Pech, a major route through the area."

According to Harrison and Army Pfc. Joshua Gaudette, an infantryman with D Company, a recently established observation post on high ground adjacent the patrol base diminished the frequency of enemy rocket and mortar assaults. But other opportunities to confront the enemy emerge, sometimes accompanied by high drama.

When a suspicious vehicle passed a Coalition checkpoint Monday (July 31) evening, the firebase Quick Reaction Force mobilized literally within a minute to intercept the sedan. The vehicle didn't get far; the infantrymen promptly arrested a suspected anti-Coalition

operator and confiscated his car, turning them over to higher headquarters before the night passed.

"It's amazing," Carabello said of the arrest. "Tenth Mountain Division Soldiers are nabbing guys the (Central Intelligence Agency) has been after for years."

Nor do Harrison and his team neglect their top priority. Chosin Soldiers established a close rapport with inhabitants of such neighboring towns and villages as Tirana, Barkandy and Kandigal. They meet frequently with local officials and deliver school supplies, books, magazines and stuffed toys to children attending area schools.

The American Soldiers work closely with co-located Afghan National Army troopers. ANA personnel accompany the American infantrymen on patrols and other major operations. They also play a prominent role in social activities at the rural outpost.

"They're nice people, fun people," Gaudette said of his ANA counterparts. "We chat through the (interpreters) sometimes. One guy came and beat me at chess a couple of games." The Orlando, Fla. native added that ANA warriors occasionally contribute Afghan specialties to the Americans' diet.

According to Chosin Soldiers, the high operation tempo actually boosts morale. "As long as we stay busy it ain't so bad," Gaudette said. "If we stay still too long and boredom sets in, we get a little antsy."

The austere living environment challenges even the hardiest of constitutions. Soldiers typically enjoy one hot meal every other day, relying on meals, ready-to-eat and

snacks garnered from "care packages" for the remainder of their sustenance. The Soldiers usually sleep "under the stars" on cots or mats.

Perpetually donning "battle rattle" under the smoldering Afghan summer sun without the benefit of air conditioning, the infantrymen spend most of the day hot – real hot. Rarely cool or dry, and without running water, Soldiers struggle to maintain high standards of personal hygiene.

They enjoy access to telephones, computers and television only during brief "refit" sessions at northeastern forward operating bases like Camp Blessing and FOB Asadabad.

Yet the Chosin Soldiers embrace their mission with good grace and even humor. In their rare moments of leisure, the infantrymen read, play cards and board games, and make conversation. They also find consolation in blessings most Americans take for granted.

"The little things – ice, care packages, magazines – help keep up morale," Harrison said.

Isolated from fellow American Soldiers amid challenging living conditions, crucial missions and heavy responsibilities, the Chosin Soldiers rally around each other and their Afghan brothers in arms. The infantrymen rely implicitly on each other, their strong team and their ANA allies when the chips are down.

"Whenever we get in contact, we react quickly," Harrison said. "We coordinate closely with the ANA. We've never had any problems during contact – we've never had a man falter."



Army Command Sgt. Maj. James Carabello, the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment command sergeant major, confers with Soldiers from 3rd Platoon, D Company, 1-32 Inf. at Patrol Base California.

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"Therefore, whoever wishes for peace, let him prepare for war."

- Vegetius